

Research Bulletin

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Human Resource Management is Key to Success in Distributed Integration Projects

Distributed integration projects are drawing vendors of systems integration services closer to business users and most importantly to business decision makers in client organisations.

However, this growing visibility for business integration (BI) vendors, moving from the "glasshouse" to the office, offers both opportunities and threats; the opportunity to extend the value-added component of systems integration (SI) projects, and the threat of failing to meet rising business-user expectations.

Vendors need to carefully examine the skill profiles of their professional staff, optimally manage this human resource in client engagements, and invest in training aimed at exploiting these opportunities. Rewards and requirements, intrinsically linked in the "new" IT world, are simultaneously becoming greater.

This bulletin discusses these threats and opportunities and focuses on initiatives by two vendors, Cap Gemini Sogetti and Groupe Bull, to develop models aimed at delivering both business and technical skills to distributed

integration projects and to gain increased leverage from their enhanced enterprise-wide presence.

Development Focused on Areas of Key Business Value

Businesses, and their IT operations, are becoming increasingly focused on areas which deliver the most direct value to the business. This is being reflected in the dynamics driving the use of SI as demonstrated in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1

Driving Forces Justifying SI Usage

Driving Force	Relative Importance
Increased revenue	4.1
Increased service	4.0
Improved quality	4.0
Support for restructuring	3.8
Revision of IT strategy	3.5

Source: INPUT

This is coupled with the growing trend to merge information systems (IS) with information management functions outside the confines of the IS department.

IS roles and structures are integrating with line functions such as logistics, order processing, and customer service, as a result of more than a mere decentralisation of IT personnel into the business.

Information based work is increasingly being "stitched" into system-based work. The, at times, artificial distinctions between system builders, support services, and users are being discarded.

These dynamics are, and will continue to be, supported by large scale client/server

integration projects, as widely reported in previous INPUT bulletins and reports. Vendors are undoubtedly finding themselves "deeper" in their client's organisations, dealing with technology-literate, enabled and competent users, as well as with IT personnel from traditional domains.

Groupe Bull Develop Desktop Integration Capability

Groupe Bull were one of the earliest vendors to embrace the concept of open systems and distributed computing. The Distributed Computing Model (DCM) has, since 1991, formed the cornerstone of Bull's product strategy but is now playing the same conceptual role for Bull's service strategy.

Exhibit 2

Groupe Bull's Distributed Computing Model

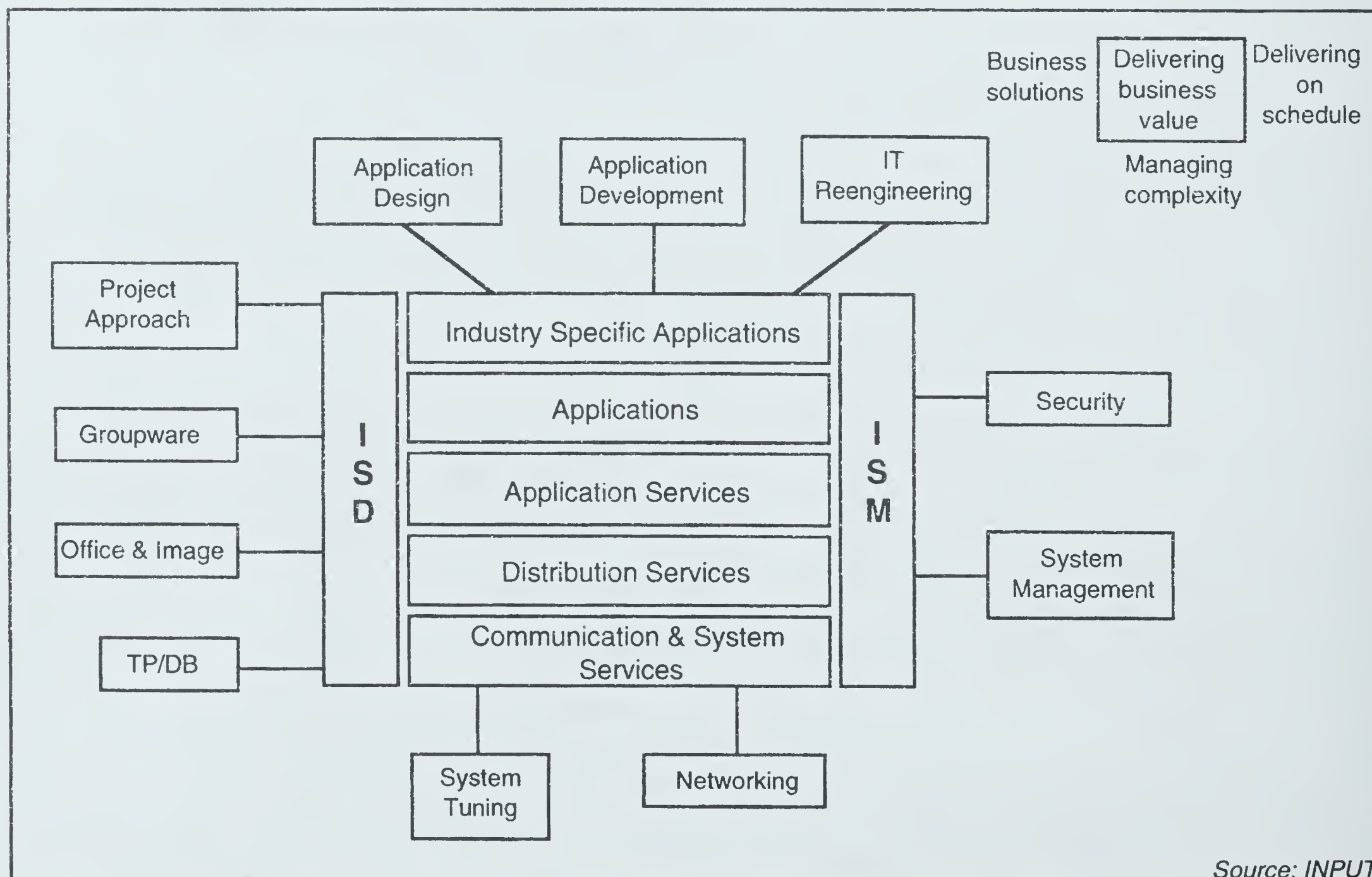


Exhibit 2 presents a graphic of DCM including the most recently announced component, Integrated System Management (ISM), a framework for integrating platform independent methods, tools, and techniques.

Bull's SI strategy is explicitly focusing on gaining leverage though building on the horizontal domains in DCM, channelling business process led, and other professional skills through this route into client engagements, and identifying and converting future possible engagements.

Bull's Management of Systems Integration Contracts (MOSIC) methodology, devised to guide delivery throughout the complete project life cycle and complementing DCM, has a "new opportunities" component which attempts to develop existing contracts and link

them to other elements of Bull's professional services capability.

Cap Gemini Sogetti Stress the Role of User Empowered Systems Development

The thrust of CGS's systems development strategy similarly reflects the increased role and importance of end-users and recognises the raised visibility that IT, and clearly by implication, IT vendors will have in, as CGS have labelled it, the "new world of IT".

CGS suggest four rules for the maximum leverage of IT technologies which address increasing segmentation within the homogeneous term "the buyer" and the implications of this fragmentation in distributed systems implementation.

Exhibit 3

CGS's Life Cycle x Type of Buyer Segmentation

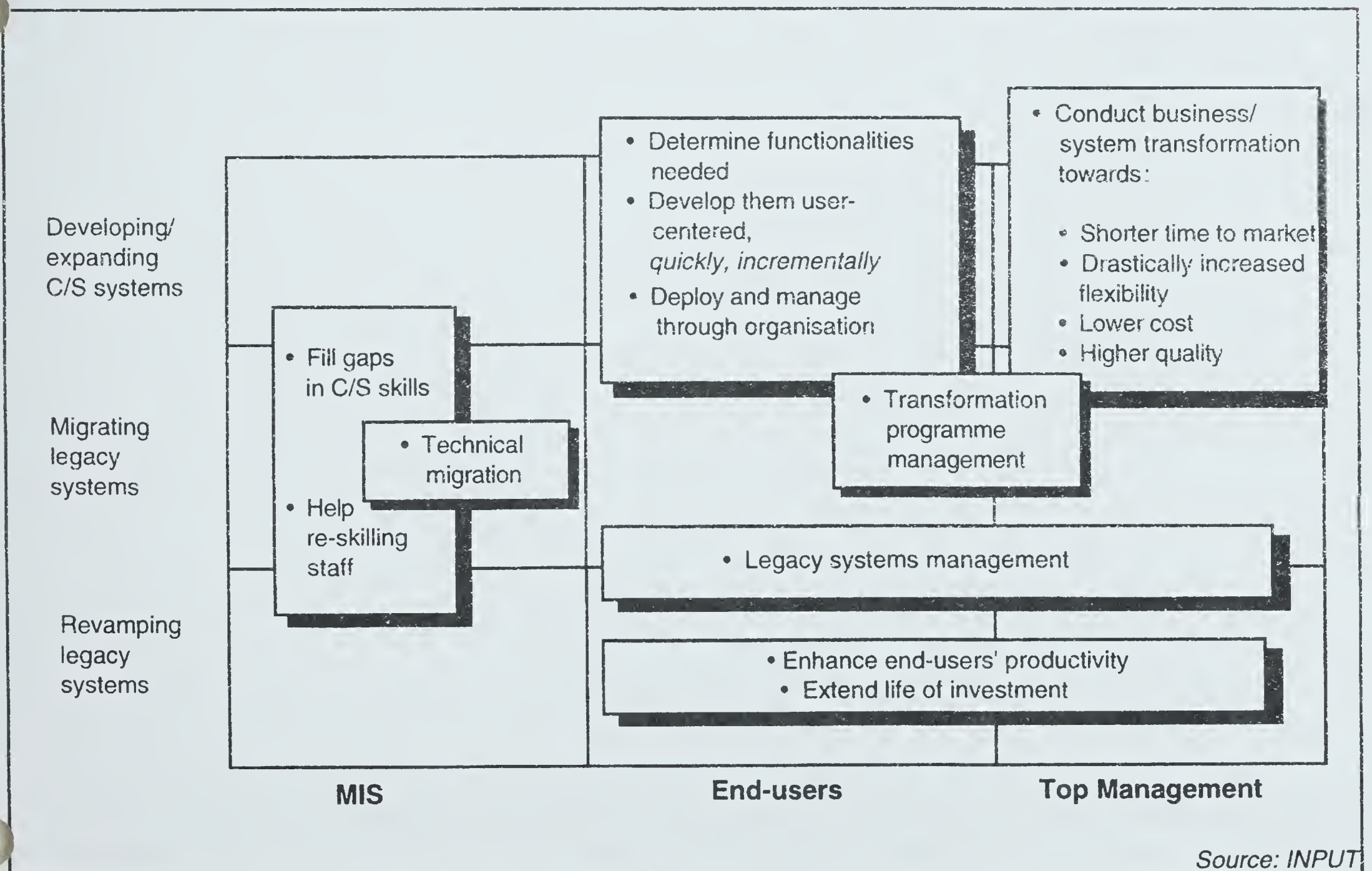


Exhibit 3 shows the altering environment of project delivery and the changing requirements necessary to win and deliver projects in organisations with closely-linked “system” and “information”, architectures emphasising human-centred, end-user empowering systems, developed in short industrialised, constantly renewing life-cycles.

The demonstrable ability to produce flexible, low-cost, high-quality systems is already a key

differentiator for BI vendors. End-user empowerment increases the stakes of systems development and gives vendors, through increased exposure to decision makers, the potential for exploiting this increased leverage. Exploiting this leverage however, requires an ability to address the business on the business's terms.

This Research Bulletin is issued as part of INPUT's Business Integration Programme—Europe. If you have questions or comments on this bulletin, please call your local INPUT organization or Ben Pring at INPUT, 17 Hill Street, London, W1X 7FB, UK, +44 (0) 71 493 9335.